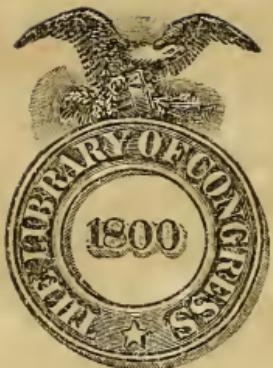


**Their  
Spirit**  
**By**   
**Robert  
Grant**



Class D 6 40

Book D 6 2

Copyright N° \_\_\_\_\_

**COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.**









**T H E I R   S P I R I T**

SOME IMPRESSIONS  
OF THE ENGLISH AND FRENCH  
DURING THE SUMMER OF  
**1916**



**T H E I R   S P I R I T**  
SOME IMPRESSIONS  
OF THE ENGLISH AND FRENCH  
DURING THE SUMMER OF  
**1916**

BY

**ROBERT GRANT**



BOSTON AND NEW YORK  
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY  
*The Riverside Press Cambridge*  
**1916**

I690  
.G67

COPYRIGHT, 1916, BY THE BOSTON TRANSCRIPT COMPANY  
COPYRIGHT, 1916, BY ROBERT GRANT

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

*Published November 1916*

\$0.50

NOV -6 1916

©CL.A446235

no. 1

## PREFACE

THESE impressions, contributed originally to the *Boston Evening Transcript*, are here reprinted in response to many requests and to provide the writer with a record of an absorbing summer. No one is more aware than he of their slightness from the point of view of the extraordinary. Yet, possibly because they describe for the most part everyday and unspectacular conditions, these notes may help American readers to comprehend the unity and to realize the heroic temper of two peoples, whose cause, although they have avoided its burden, is essentially their own.

ROBERT GRANT

BOSTON, October 9, 1916



## THEIR SPIRIT

### I

HAVING a son and grandchildren temporarily living in England, I did not need to seek a reason for leaving America this summer. I was glad, however, of an excuse for getting as near as possible to the most terrific thing that has ever happened, and had little patience with the well-intentioned murmurs of cautious souls who asked if I was not afraid of floating mines. In this day, when individual life seems to count for next to nothing with the rest of the world, the fear of being "a long time dead" continues to palsy unimaginative Americans. Yet one took barely

## THEIR SPIRIT

a sporting chance in crossing the Atlantic this July. Although, as we entered the war zone, our good ship, the New Amsterdam, had her life rafts ready, her boats cleared for lowering, identifying flags fore and aft and electric lettering on her sides, the charm of the radiant horizon and summer sea eclipsed all sense of peril during our approach to Falmouth. The passengers — some Americans, a plentiful sprinkling of Dutch, a number of Canadians (chiefly wives going out to meet their husbands on leave from the front), several young women on their way to Red Cross Hospitals — must surely have lost no sleep on that last night. Among the few Englishmen on board was one of forty-two, just beyond the age-limit, who, hav-

## THEIR SPIRIT

ing spent over twenty years in Texas, was going out to enlist.

Our passports had been searchingly scrutinized more than once on the pier at New York. The arrival of a file of soldiers as soon as we dropped anchor was our first intimation that we were in a country at war. The sheep, in the form of the passengers for Rotterdam, were separated from the goats and herded in the second-class quarters, while those expecting to land assembled at 8 A.M. in the saloon, at the door of which stood armed sentinels barring egress. If one left the room before examination it must be in the custody of a man in khaki, who never relaxed vigilance.

As our names were called we approached a table to run the gantlet

## THEIR SPIRIT

of a military officer and several lynx-eyed inspectors who inquired our reasons for visiting England and put other searching questions while studying our credentials. Behind them sat a burly-looking woman in plain clothes whose function was to lead away and search any female passenger under suspicion.

Few had difficulty in justifying their desire to land. "You here again? You've lost five pounds in weight since six months ago," cried the lieutenant at the table, quick as a flash, by way of identification to a ship acquaintance of mine. Though every one in authority was perfectly civil, the process was necessarily slow. We did not leave the ship in the tender until after three o'clock and it was six be-

## THEIR SPIRIT

fore the train for London started. Falmouth itself looked at peace with all the world, and as we gazed out of the windows at the lovely landscape, glistening with the promise of a rich harvest, one would never have guessed the stupendous truth but for the ominous text in the railway carriage which meets the eye wherever one travels:

### WARNING: DEFENCE OF THE REALM

Discussion in public of naval and military matters may convey information to the enemy. Be on your guard.

As the twilight deepened the guard pulled down the shades of our compartment with a resolute air. We did not reach Paddington until past midnight, but before we could obtain

## THEIR SPIRIT

rooms in the adjacent hotel it was obligatory to fill in the blanks thrust at us from the office with answers to questions concerning our identity, and this is required of every one.

Provided the traveller is careful to keep the curtains drawn while the lights are lit and to visit the nearest police station promptly after passing the night, there are no restrictions on coming or going in the zone of unforbidden places — that is to say, virtually anywhere in England, except certain parts of the seacoast and the vicinity of camps or munition plants. An alien may even have access to these if vouched for and possessed of an identity book, obtainable at the police station for a shilling, after setting forth his pedigree and producing two photo-

## THEIR SPIRIT

graphs. My wife and I each procured one from a very broad-shouldered and very civil police sergeant at Oxted, Surrey, ten minutes by train from the little town of Lingfield, where we made our headquarters. There is a munition plant at Oxted, and from our top windows we could readily see the searchlights probing the sky at night. We added another chalk-mark to the long tally of German falsehoods after reading in a despatch from Berlin published during our stay that Oxted had been raided by Zeppelins and the munition plant wrecked. Over the lovely English garden, where we sat or gathered roses during the late delightful weather of this August, aeroplanes on their way to or from France passed constantly with a res-

## THEIR SPIRIT

onant whirr audible at a great height, but never a Zeppelin showed itself, though we were hopefully on the watch for one.

Living in the country at an easy distance from London, we frequently went to town, though restrictions on the use of petrol — a limit of about eight gallons a month to the everyday consumer after August first — made us husband our resources and travel by train. There is a scarcity of nothing else in England — not even petrol, according to those who know, the ban regarding it being intended as a salutary check on week-end and joy-riding extravagance. Housekeeping bills have gone up about sixty per cent, and people are living simply; but at the hotels and restaurants there was

## THEIR SPIRIT

no change in the viands and not much in the prices over former years. The plutocratic American contingent had dwindled to a rump, to be sure, and quiet reigned at its favorite hostellries; but elsewhere there was a fair attendance of patrons, half of whom were men in khaki. London was lively on the surface,—especially since the good news from the Somme,—despite those tragic lists in the morning newspapers. It seemed as though the determination of an aroused England to win the war and thorough confidence in its ability to do so in the end were inspiring every one to cloak his or her individual grief. A friend told me of passing the week-end at a country house where every woman present had lost her only son; yet never a word was said.

## THEIR SPIRIT

Accustomed as I had become during the last year to the formula, "Isn't France superb! But England has made a mess of things. Why does n't she wake up?" there was nothing but cheer in what was seen and [heard. I gleaned spiritual chastisement also, for my friends at home if not for myself, from the words of an intelligent Englishwoman at luncheon: "You Americans ought to have realized, when you threw up your hands and talked of Gallipoli and the rest, that we are just like yourselves — another democracy, only we happen to have a King instead of a President. Besides, we are much slower than you. But look at England now."

## II

LONDON is teeming with soldiers. England also for the matter of that. We met them by the score wherever we journeyed — Rochester, Cirencester, Bath, or Liverpool. They skirted the roads in constant procession at weekends, sometimes in little groups, each Tommy swinging briskly a short stick; sometimes with sweethearts or families, as we rode to Ashdown Forest for golf; and again, as I whirled toward Bramshot on a similar errand, I passed what seemed a mile of recruits in process of being disciplined for war in the great camp at Farnborough, tilting at dummies with the bayonet and being made familiar with trenches and wire

## THEIR SPIRIT

entanglement. They are in evidence everywhere, but in London one meets them at almost every step, vigorous, healthy-looking fellows for the most part, and invariably in the best of spirits, be they veterans on leave from the front or convalescents from the hospitals in their blue or grey suits (which so many American women have made) and their red ties, or men from the various encampments waiting their turn to be sent to France. When I was here two years ago I thought that some of the troops looked undersized and puny; but of the thousands I ran across this summer in the streets, railway stations, restaurants and Y.M.C.A. huts in London, I recall only one battalion that did not appear rugged. During the six weeks I was in England I saw

## THEIR SPIRIT

only one soldier who seemed under the influence of liquor.

As for the Australians, they were a delight to the eye: tall, strapping, broad-shouldered chaps with ingenuous, good-natured faces. They come up to London on leave from Salisbury Plain in large detachments and they happened to be swarming everywhere, especially in the neighborhood of the Strand, on various days when I was in town. Some of them wear feathers at one side of their slouch hats, which provides a quasi-d'Artagnan effect. When I inquired why they were thus adorned, of a wounded Australian just from Pozières, thirty hours from the battle front to the hospital, he answered gayly, "For swank, I guess." But I believe they

## THEIR SPIRIT

are cavalrymen in embryo, who did not bring their horses with them. Later I crossed the Channel with another stalwart specimen of the same breed. We hobnobbed together in Havre during the hours of waiting and, in return perhaps for being helped over the rough places by my Stratford Atte Bowe French, he told me of his life in the trenches. "No matter how brave a man is, he is afraid at first. Whoever says he was n't is a liar. Sleep? You don't in the beginning." He told me of how, walking with a friend, he had stepped aside for an instant and an exploding shell had obliterated his comrade so that literally there was no trace of him left.

Every man in khaki carries his credentials on his metal shoulder straps;

## THEIR SPIRIT

in the case of the Colonials, "Canada," "Australia," etc., in full; in that of the English, appropriate lettering to indicate their several regiments. An officer can be told at a glance by the strap which crosses from his shoulder to his belt without studying the stars or crown upon the cuff of his sleeve indicative of his rank. The flying corps men, whether officers or privates, are known at once by the Scotch caps of khaki worn on the side of the head. Every pilot is an officer, distinguishable by the two spread wings embroidered on the breast of his uniform.

A young American, to whom the Military Cross has been awarded for gallantry in fighting above the clouds, took me across England to one of the largest aerodromes, where I saw the

## THEIR SPIRIT

latest type of war machines being tested. While I stood in front of the lines of sheds on the wide plateau, a biplane straight from active service in France came circling down and descended at our feet. The huge dragon-fly, tarnished by smoke and grease but intact, had made the journey in two hours and a half. This latest type carries only a pilot; the observer is dispensed with. The gun is stationary, hugging the left side, a Vickars-Maxim with a magazine of two hundred and fifty charges, but so adapted that the propeller cannot be struck by the discharge. Aim is controlled by pointing the machine, not the gun. The bombs are carried underneath, detachable by a spring. The machines are not armored, but they will stand

## THEIR SPIRIT

some peppering. The most vulnerable part is the petrol tank just forward of where the pilot sits. The piercing of the wings is not a serious matter; but if the propeller be shattered, one might descend in safety, but would not be likely to escape. In warfare the aviator is sent up for an hour or two at a time. The fighting ordinarily takes place above the clouds, where there is no wind, and each opponent tries to pot or wing his adversary from above.

The only external sign of war, besides the ubiquitous individual soldier, is the woman bus conductor with her sister who collects tickets and makes herself generally useful at the railway stations. As an Englishman ungrudging-

## THEIR SPIRIT

ingly put it, "England is being run by flappers — and run remarkably well." Certainly these fledglings, of whose steadiness tradition offered mournful prophecies, have turned the tables on the pessimists. Nor should their satisfaction in their new earning power, their rumored tendency to squander their revenues on wrist watches and other luxuries, nor indeed the problem as to what is to become of all the women workers after the war, obscure the patriotic zeal that makes them faithful and efficient in the national emergency. To win one's spurs on the jolting platform of a bus with constant trips to the roof for fares, requires coolness, agility, and pleasant manners, all of which were displayed by these girl conductors attired not

## THEIR SPIRIT

unbecomingly in dark blue costumes (often brown holland in summer) and long leggings. The female railway officials, in their close-fitting short uniform and visored caps, under which their back hair is neatly rolled up, have a piquant military air.

I mention these because they are always in evidence. They are but symbols, however, of the tremendous activity below the surface which escapes the casual eye and must be seen in order to be realized—privates in the great army of womankind which has thrown itself into the service of the country to fill the countless gaps occasioned by the withdrawal of 3,000,000 men from bread-winning and to “man” the innumerable new industries whereby the citizen army

## THEIR SPIRIT

is supplied with ordnance, fed, succored, snatched from the jaws of death and rehabilitated by ministrations — voluntary whenever the individual can afford it and constantly when he or she cannot — throughout the United Kingdom.

Some one said publicly while I was in England that this is a young man's war. That is true if we reckon simply those engaged in killing. But the fighters at home, whose labors are essential to success, include not merely young women, but the middle-aged of both sexes and scores of superannuated men who devote long hours to this or that requisite need in the scheme of almost universal service. My wife and I visited numerous shops and rooms where this

## THEIR SPIRIT

voluntary work was being carried on and found all animated with the same energetic, steadfast, and indefatigable spirit. We saw elderly men painstakingly absorbed in the nice work of constructing artificial legs and crutches, while in the adjoining room a group of women were making splints, and so deftly that it was inspiring to watch them. "I was a wood-carver before the war," one of them said, "and all of us in this room were artists of one sort or another who wanted to help." And so it goes.

Speaking of legs, I am reminded that on the way back from France three weeks later, I struck up an acquaintance with an English officer who pointed downwards and said, "That's an American leg and it's a

## THEIR SPIRIT

wonder—much better than the English, which is too heavy. The other day I played three sets of tennis on it and it worked beautifully.” He was a fine-looking fellow and attached, since his infirmity, or rather in spite of it, to the General Headquarters Staff in France. He lost his real leg in the early days of the war when, as he said, there were no trenches and simply a little earth was scooped up as a barrier.

My wife, who is interested in collecting funds for artificial limbs, requested me to make inquiries concerning them in France, and I did so. There seems no question that the American leg is far superior to any, and there are at present three American makers of legs and arms in Paris. I learned from an official at the Ameri-

## THEIR SPIRIT

can Clearing House who has this charity at heart that the French Government provides the mutilated with either a stump or a very heavy leg costing two hundred francs (forty dollars); but only with the appliances, no money. The American articulated leg costs fully one hundred dollars, and the best arms are proportionately expensive — the admirable Carnes arm costing about two hundred dollars. The moral deduced by my informant from this was that, for the ordinary mechanic and farmer, a stump is practically as serviceable as the articulated leg for the reason that his earnings would not suffice to keep it in repair; but to the man of superior employment a good articulated leg is indispensable. The demand for limbs —

## THEIR SPIRIT

for arms even more than for legs — far exceeds the supply. The policy pursued by those managing this splendid charity has been to ask a partial payment from the recipients — a hundred francs, say, from each individual — and I was told that in every instance but one the sufferer had been eager to contribute.

While making these inquiries I was taken to the Ecole Rachel just outside the gates of Paris, one of the shops of the Association Nationale des Mutilés de la Guerre, where some sixty men were being taught self-supporting trades best adapted to their individual injuries, — learning to be mechanics, shoemakers, jewellers, designers, and the like. It was a very pathetic and interesting sight. The greater number

## THEIR SPIRIT

lacked either a leg or an arm. One man, who was at work on some castings, the adjustment of which required precision, had lost most of one side. Another minus his left leg and his left forearm was draughting from mechanical designs. He said he was a farmer with a taste for invention and tinkering and that he was trying to inform himself in order to be able to manage somehow later. He was so cheerful and optimistic that his confidence was contagious, though the fellow Bostonian, who was my companion, and I had tears in our eyes; but our guide carefully took down his name with the evident intention of keeping him in mind.

### III

IT was of England, however, that I was writing. I have digressed to Paris only for a moment, as I shall take you across the Channel later. But whatever is true of the determination and the ardor of the workers in either country is equally true of the other. I happened to be in England when the war broke out and I remember saying in those early weeks that England was in a death-grapple with Germany for the economic supremacy of the world and seemed to have no conception of it. Such were the surface indications. Yet after all is said and her later muddling is admitted, it is patent now that from the very first there was a group of

## THEIR SPIRIT

noiseless men behind the scenes who realized the magnitude of the effort necessary, who took the bit of tireless endeavor between their teeth and who hold it still. How otherwise are we to account for her condition to-day? England is wide-awake and on the full tide of her efficiency. Referring to this an English friend, not prone to overpraise, remarked to me, with feeling, that after the war some one ought to receive high honors for the effectiveness of the transportation system. It is certainly a marvellous one that has been able to carry to France, without interruptions or the loss, so far as we know, of a single life, such a continuous stream of troops, munitions, and supplies. Writing in the "*Petit Journal*" of August 4, the second anniver-

## THEIR SPIRIT

sary of England's entrance into the war, M. Pichon truly if magnanimously declared: "Let no Frenchman deceive himself on this matter. Events have proved that if the struggle had been localized between France and Russia on the one hand and Germany and her allies on the other, a German victory would have been the consequence. It is useless to cherish phantasms. The facts are there. Without Great Britain our ports were practically at the mercy of the enemy, and our oversea communications practically cut off."

Too many details spoil the perspective of an impressionist picture, but a few are essential for reality. One of the touching sights in England — the

## THEIR SPIRIT

straws which reveal the wealth of feeling beneath a brave surface — is the roll of honor in every railway station and in the porch of every church, a list of the employees or parishioners at the front, often with the names of those never to return starred with a little flag. I saw this again in the hotels of Paris.

I recall a Sunday vespers service in the old parish church with the beautiful tower and flying buttresses at ancient and Roman Cirencester (which some pronounce Ciceter). All present were women and elderly men; and as I listened to the intercessory prayers tenderly intoned by the rector, I could not but feel that the solemn pauses throbbed with the universal heartache of England, masking even in God's presence as fortitude.

## THEIR SPIRIT

Next day we were in Bath, where the kind acquaintance—an alderman of that city—who swept us in his automobile from one historic landmark and one superb view to another, was no less eager to introduce us to the hospitals and all that pertained to the war than to the Pump Rooms with their ever thermal springs, the Assembly Rooms dear to the readers of Jane Austen, and the Royal Crescent, the scene of Mr. Winkle's discomfiture. There are hospitals everywhere in England; and nothing is more noticeable than the number of temporary structures all over the land, with some building originally used for another purpose as a starting-point, beyond which extend at various angles row after row of long huts, resembling barracks, where the

## THEIR SPIRIT

wounded are cared for — neat, light, and airy, for the most part, with a single row of beds along each side.

We visited various hospitals. The one we saw at Bath was substantially like those in London or its neighborhood. One met always the same cheerfulness among the patients, the same unselfish devotion on the part of the attendants. Among the few gladdening sights in this panorama of determination is the passage of the huge automobiles bearing loads of convalescents on sanctioned joy rides, in their blue blouses and red ties, with radiant faces rivalling boys let loose from school. An acquaintance, eager to play the lady bountiful, told me she asked a wounded soldier to choose what he would have and his first and only choice was a

## THEIR SPIRIT

mouthpiece of the jew's-harp variety which she finally obtained in Paris, for there were none left in London. In the very grateful letter which she received in acknowledgment, he laid stress on the pleasure which his gift had given to every one in the ward. Such are the simple tastes of Tommy Atkins in the midst of proffered luxury.

An incident vouched for at a London luncheon table illustrates his readiness and his sanity. During the height of the recruiting campaign a Salvation Army preacher, envious perhaps of the emphasis laid on the glories of trench warfare, endeavored to electrify the crowd by the apostrophe, "Khaki, khaki, khaki — I see nothing else wherever I turn. But let me remind you, my friends, that I belong to a

## THEIR SPIRIT

greater army than any of which you can boast — the army of Heaven.” As he paused to let his words possess his audience he was met by the retort, “Is that so, man? Then you’re a h—l of a long way from your barracks!”

We did not leave Bath without stopping at the Canadian Discharge Hospital at Prior Park, which commands an exquisite view from its proud height, once the seat of famous hospitality, and later a Roman Catholic institution, but now the haven to which all invalided Canadian soldiers must come in order to receive discharge papers and be sent home with fixed pensions. Certainly they have won for themselves the distinction of bravest of the brave, if one is to discriminate in this

## THEIR SPIRIT

carnival of human courage and impassioned loyalty. Several times this summer have I heard it asked—and sometimes by Americans a little querulously—"How do you account for the devotion of the Dominions to the Mother Country?" It has been one of the most inspiring features of this war of surprises and may well be spiritually disconcerting, not merely to the Germans, but to those whose motto is "safety first." Nor is it less to the credit of these fearless legions from overseas that their ardor sprang from the perception that the Colonies would be nothing but dismembered limbs were England vanquished.

A few days later we were at Rochester, where in Egyptian darkness—for not a ray escaped from any window in

## THEIR SPIRIT

that town or from adjacent Chatham — we watched, on the terrace under the shadow of the Cathedral, a dozen searchlights probe the sky like huge luminous pencils, divergent, concentrating, crossing and recrossing, while our hostess, an American before her marriage, told us the story, typical of every town in England, of how a neighborhood utterly unprepared for war had been welded into a body of tireless, enthusiastic workers whose only impulse was service to the nation. Next morning under her guidance we made a circuit of Chatham, the objective of more than one Zeppelin raid, saw again large bodies of recruits being made fit for war, the extensive naval buildings where are housed no less than thirteen thousand British sailors, and passed

## THEIR SPIRIT

huge lorries of the Army Service Corps transporting supplies for the troops.

Returning to London, we availed ourselves of an invitation to inspect the "London Rest and Refreshment Huts" maintained by the Y.M.C.A., one of the most admirable and beneficent forms of war relief. "Under the Sign of the Red Triangle a Warm Welcome awaits All Men in H.M. Uniform" — so he who runs may read, and this means a bed and breakfast, dinner, tea or supper at reasonable rates at any of the huts, most of which are in the vicinity of one of the big railway stations and all of which are open day and night. Their mission is to provide better accommodations and food than could be obtained elsewhere

## THEIR SPIRIT

at the same price and consequent protection from evil company. Self-respect is catered to by a charge for everything except a "wash and brush up" and cloak-room facilities; a shilling and sixpence for a room and breakfast. So popular are these resorts that although the first was not opened until July, 1915, there are to-day fourteen in active operation in London frequented weekly by some seven thousand Tommies. There is also a hut for officers close to Victoria Station. Beginning with the Shakespeare Hut, a sunny, inviting place just opened, we visited a number in succession, including that at Waterloo, which might be termed the storm centre of patronage. Although midnight is the hour when the spectacle is most dramatic,

## THEIR SPIRIT

here already at a little after noon the hut was thronged with soldiers chatting, smoking, writing letters, reading magazines, or drowsing, according to their humor. We saw the cubicles, never more than two in a room, the busy kitchen and the neat tables, with lady volunteers as maids and waitresses, attired in red as a foil to the few paid attendants who are required for certain kinds of work and to insure good cooking and regularity.

## IV

How long will the war last and what do they think of us over there? No one in a position to know expects the end for at least another year and the attitude of the man in the street regarding the terms of peace is well expressed by this extract from a leading newspaper which was printed shortly before I left England:—

The really important point is that the Cabinet should know that the people of this country are determined to carry on the war until the military power of Germany is utterly crushed, and that they are equally determined to insist upon conditions of peace which will prevent the rehabilitation of that power within any brief period.

## THEIR SPIRIT

As to what they think of us in England, the answer is simple: They scarcely think of us at all. Only a very few items of American news find their way into the daily press. At the time when the black list, the fate of Sir Roger Casement, and British interference with the mails were agitating our public, neither the "Times," "Post," nor "Telegraph," nor any of the evening dailies gave more than a scant paragraph or so to our opinions. Oftener they printed nothing. There had been so much backing and filling on the part of our Government that what America thought had ceased to interest them, it having been set down for certain long ago that we had no intention of taking a definite stand on the moral issues at stake. I do not think that

## THEIR SPIRIT

either England or France expected or desired us to enter the war, but what they did hope for, after the situation became plain, was an official expression of moral sympathy. Had the United States uttered this, she would have put the civilization of the Old World under everlasting obligations. Her failure to do so has ranked us, in the estimation of Europe, with “that caitiff choir of angels who have not rebellious been nor faithful were to God, but were for self,” of whom the poet writes:—

The heavens expelled them, not to be less fair;  
Nor them the nethermore abyss receives,  
For glory none the damned would have from  
them.

The French feel very grateful for our generous gifts of money, munificent in individual cases, yet, when

## THEIR SPIRIT

measured by our population, far from overpowering; profoundly grateful also to our noble-hearted youths who have lost or risked their lives in the trenches, ambulance corps, or in the air in order to repel the German horror, and to the spirited group of Americans in Paris who have labored unstintingly during two years to relieve human suffering. In both countries one encounters disappointment rather than enmity. Thoughtful people realize the dilemma we were in and make allowances for us. Nevertheless the attitude of our rank and file in this crisis, of whose sentiments our President is believed to be the mouthpiece, has given fresh life to the old European suspicion that the United States loves high-sounding phrases, but will

## THEIR SPIRIT

side-step at a pinch, and has caused both the English and the French to feel that by failing to rise above the height of the dollar mark and its own immediate safety, the foremost exponent of aspiring democracy has missed the grandest opportunity to protest against wrong ever offered to a nation.

## V

BEFORE one can go to France it is necessary to have one's passport indorsed by the American consul-general and then visé by the French consul-general, whose offices are in spacious but now semi-commercial Bedford Square. One must have a fairly good reason for crossing the Channel or permission is not granted. As I am a member of the Boston Committee of the American Hostels for Refugees and Children of Flanders and was armed with a telegram from Paris, I had no difficulty in satisfying the authorities. After I had waited half an hour in the antechamber, one of a crowd of other aliens, mostly French

## THEIR SPIRIT

(the English apply next door), including many women, my number was called, and I passed upstairs by a rear staircase to run the gantlet of several officials seated at little tables, to whom I handed photographs and answered a few searching questions. Permission to go is limited to three consecutive days. It would be necessary — so everybody is informed — to leave England on one of them or passage would be refused.

This was Friday; I was planning to start on Sunday. “Vu au Consulat Général de France,” etc., having been stamped on my passport, I took my departure from Bedford Square only to turn up there (with the bad half-crown that was given me in change) on the following Monday and ask for an

## THEIR SPIRIT

extension which was politely granted, together with a good coin. I had gone early with my hand-bags on Sunday night to Waterloo Station, which was packed with soldiers and their families exchanging week-end farewells. I had my ticket, but when I reached the platform progress was barred by the announcement that the boat train for Southampton, scheduled for 10.30, would not start that night and that the passengers of the night before were on their way back. When I asked the reason, the official answered ominously, "Something in the Channel."

Travel had been resumed when I reappeared at Waterloo on Tuesday, and on the way up to Paris I learned that two submarines, which were promptly netted, had been the cause

## THEIR SPIRIT

of my delay. The only route now open for travellers is from Southampton to Havre, a six-hour journey on the water. The train reaches Southampton shortly after midnight, and the steamer does not start until about five o'clock. I had been advised by a friend to ride in one of the rear railway carriages in order, on arrival, to be exactly opposite the entrance to the room where the passports would be examined. Consequently I was in the front line of the three hundred passengers seated in rows on benches or standing in the rear. A rigid examination of passports followed. We proceeded slowly in single file from inspector to inspector, past soldier after soldier. It was one o'clock before the pink ticket, which permitted me to

## THEIR SPIRIT

collect my bags and go on board, was handed me and I had claimed my cabin. How long it was before the end of the file was reached I do not know, for after a brief survey of the shrouded harbor from the deck I went to bed and was asleep some time before the Hantonia started.

When I awoke it was still dark. Peering through the porthole I made out that it was a clear, moonlit night, and I could discern, but not very distinctly, the outlines of one or two vessels. When morning came—a lovely morning with a summer sea—nothing was visible until we sighted the French coast. The Hantonia is a sturdy craft with two funnels. Her heavy deck seats are also intended for life rafts and in the cabins there was an abundance

## THEIR SPIRIT

of life belts, but I doubt if any one put them on. My fellow passengers — among them a number of English officers and hospital nurses — were evidently not a nervous lot. Our approach to Havre was between two strings of mines converging to a narrow passage at the harbor's mouth and indicated by huge buoys resembling corks. Two large steamships crowded with English troops were just ahead of us. A French patrol boat with guns and torpedo tubes dashed out as we passed in — the only warship that we saw on the passage. On our starboard bow were the protruding masts and funnels of two sunken vessels, but whether they ran ashore or were the victims of mines or submarines was not disclosed to me. We reached the

## THEIR SPIRIT

jetty about noon, and before separating — the train for Paris did not leave until five o'clock — stood in line again and exhibited our passports, this time to French officials, three of them in turn.

Havre viewed casually showed few outward signs of war. In the streets I met soldiers here and there, both French in their sky-blue uniforms, and English, but they were not numerous. Tortoni's, where I lunched, was well patronized. On the tram which bore me to the railway station a very voluble and very good-natured woman conductor of large physique ruled her compatriots with a rod of iron. As we sped toward Paris the abundant crops were being gathered by men long past their prime, or occasionally by women.

## THEIR SPIRIT

Rouen was still a thing of beauty as we crossed the Seine, and the dinner served to us on the train in time of war was better than that of the average American dining-car in these piping days of neutrality. And so without misadventure or friction we reached Paris in the early evening.

## VI

“TAISEZ-VOUS! Méfiez-vous! Les oreilles ennemis vous écoutent,” the sign which confronts one in railway trains and other public places in France, has a tenser and more dramatic sound than the equivalent English warning. My first duty, after passing the night in Paris, was to report to the Commissaire de Police nearest my hotel, who provided me with a stamped paper emblazoned with my photograph, which set forth that I was authorized to continue my residence in Paris for the time being.

There were fewer surface indications of war than in London. There were not nearly so many soldiers in

## THEIR SPIRIT

the streets. The cafés on the fashionable boulevards seemed to have their usual complement of guests, despite the absence of Americans. There was no scarcity of taxicabs, driven by men. The hotels in the Place Vendôme and the shops along the Rue de la Paix and in the Place de l'Opéra were open. When I looked in at the Café des Ambassadeurs at half-past seven there was scarcely anybody dining, but by half-past eight every table was occupied.

Paris in August is not apt to be lively; it was not lively then, but the atmosphere was brisk rather than sad. Confidence was in the air,—the corner had been turned and Roumania was said to be coming in,—with the result that the prevalent note was almost

## THEIR SPIRIT

cheerful, notwithstanding the universal grief. To the visitor Paris seemed normal for midsummer if one did not probe too deep. The theatres, such as they were, were thinly attended. There was no heart for even the semblance of gaiety, and the only fashion were the long mourning veils; yet one realized that Paris at last felt sure of winning.

The streets at night were dark, but not so completely so as in London, where one had to grope one's way at times. Dark as it was in Paris, there was enough light afforded here and there by small and shaded street lamps to enable the taxis to whirl by furiously. I was assured that business was much better than a year ago. Asking as to the men waiters at the res-

## THEIR SPIRIT

taurants, I was told that many were Spaniards. When I ventured to say to a quiet Frenchman, "How superb France has been!" he answered sadly, "Yes, but at what a cost." Beneath the brave surface there is no lack of appreciation of the appalling sacrifice. France is heart-broken, but it sees the beginning of the end, and this has brought fresh zest in living. At the Madeleine, into which I stepped twice at the noon hour, a few women were kneeling before the shrine of the Virgin and there were votive flowers for the dead on the altar, but the soul of France seemed to be on the battle-fields and in the hospitals and workshops rather than in the churches.

On the day after my arrival I was

## THEIR SPIRIT

called by telephone from the Bureau de la Presse attached to the Ministère des Affaires Etrangères (Foreign Office) and told that I was to be allowed to go to the front. I owed this favor to my friend, Mrs. Edith Wharton, the distinguished novelist, who has made France her debtor by her beneficent charities, the American Hostels for Refugees and Children of Flanders, and who spoke to the authorities as soon as she heard that I was coming. I was asked to call at 3 Rue François Premier for further instructions. I did so that afternoon, and there learned from the courteous officials who received me that the journey was fixed for four days later and that the party would include two or three American war correspondents and a well-known

## THEIR SPIRIT

French man of letters. Our probable destination would be the first-line trenches beyond Rheims — not a very active front at the moment, but the more accessible on that account. I was provided with a little cardboard identity book containing my photograph, wherein I was described as a “Romancier Américain,” and my movements in the war zone were limited to a particular date and locality. There was space reserved in the book for other expeditions, and it seems that the Government is not averse to giving a small number of properly accredited foreigners chances at intervals to observe what is interesting.

I presented myself on the following Tuesday morning at the Gare de l'Est to take the train for Epernay that left

## THEIR SPIRIT

at 8 A.M. Except for my “Permis de Correspondent de la Presse aux Armées” I should not have been permitted to buy a ticket for any spot in the war zone. After this was shown to the gendarme guarding the approach to the ticket office there was no difficulty. The long express train, the carriages of which were labelled “Nancy,” etc., contained chiefly army officers or persons whose employment was near the front. Our route was through the watershed of the Marne. As I viewed the smiling and, as it appeared from the windows, unmarred and fertile landscape, a succession of lovely valleys and commanding heights, it was difficult to credit that this paradise was the scene of the stupendous and ever memorable battle. As we

## THEIR SPIRIT

crossed the river at a certain point the two experienced American correspondents, who shared the compartment with me and who had recently visited the district as far as Meaux and Ourcq and Etravigny, where they saw the rows on rows of crosses, white for the French and black for the German, identified for my benefit this and that landmark.

## VII

WE reached Epernay about ten, where we were greeted by the French officer who had been detailed to meet us, Lieutenant C—— D——, whose left hand was in a splint from a wound received at Verdun in the early days of the war. Its nerves were dead, but so deft as well as debonair was he that one scarcely realized it. Our assembled party had increased to nine in all, including one lady, who had been allowed to come because she had travelled much in little-explored portions of the globe. There were four army automobiles, sky-blue like the French uniforms and helmets, waiting for us, three of them limousines and one open.

## THEIR SPIRIT

Presumably because I had brought a fairly heavy coat with me, I was invited by the lieutenant to occupy the open car with him and the lady, and soon we were speeding in the direction of Rheims through a lovely rolling country where the crops were being gathered, which revealed no traces of war.

Our first pause was on rising ground where we dismounted to obtain a distant view of Rheims Cathedral, which from this point looked intact, and our first glimpse of the German trenches, which, from ten miles away, appeared glistening white threads upon the hill-side. We gathered round our guide, who, map in hand, pointed out where we were and where he proposed to take us. One ran a little risk, he said smil-

## THEIR SPIRIT

ingly, but the Germans rarely fired before five o'clock.

On we went, and presently were speeding over a long road screened partly by cloth, partly by bushes, in order to conceal the passers, and manifestly the main approach for troops and munitions. In the occasional villages we came to, we saw women and old men sitting in front of their doors, and were told that most of the inhabitants were fixtures. The first objects that arrested the eye as we entered Rheims were a couple of women crossing the street. People continue to live there placidly, notwithstanding the Germans often fire on the town. "Whenever we do anything they don't like," said our lieutenant, "they bang away at the Cathedral."

## THEIR SPIRIT

My first impression as I stepped from the car and gazed up at the Cathedral was that it is less badly damaged than I feared. It still stands, and so substantially that for an instant I was deceived. The next moment I realized that I was looking at the lacerated, riddled, calcined remnant of what had once been a thing of supreme beauty. In one sense the edifice is all there, in another there is nothing left. Pierre Loti's simile fits the case—"It gives the impression of a huge mummy, still upright and majestic, but which a breath would reduce to ashes." It is a wonder that the Germans did not complete their handiwork. They certainly did their best, for the intervening shops and houses in the line of fire are completely gutted, literally torn

## THEIR SPIRIT

to pieces, while certain parts of the town are uninjured. We rode by them later and bought photographs at a little shop which somehow had escaped the general destruction.

The shell fire which wrought the damage fell obliquely. That is, it must have come across the side of the Cathedral on my right hand as I faced the façade, so that the gorgeous front was not directly exposed; but the exploding missiles crashed into the Place du Parvis and ricochetted. There is a gaping hole, wide as a large man's shoulders, in the roof of the side in question and many of the carvings have been lopped off. The statues on the famous front are sadly mutilated, but it was not easy to estimate the exact damage for the reason that they

## THEIR SPIRIT

are now protected and propped up by sandbags.

The exterior of the adjacent Hôtel Lion d'Or looks as if it had been used as a shooting gallery, so disfigured is it with shot holes. Within the Cathedral the havoc wrought by fire exceeds that from the bombardment. Nearly all the priceless glass in the church is gone. Only one half of the celebrated rose-window remains. The pavement is shattered here and there and strewn with glass and débris. Pigeons roost in the capitals of the columns and their feathers are everywhere. Certain portions of the structure, both inside and without, have escaped injury, but as a whole it is terribly disfigured and defiled. Whether it can be adequately restored after the

## THEIR SPIRIT

war is over and the sense of outrage less acute remains to be seen.

After an hour or so in Rheims we set out for the trenches; in two automobiles instead of four in order to diminish the number of objects on the road, lest the Germans, who are constantly on the watch for munition wagons, open fire. The Cathedral is a mile and a quarter from the front; the inner and outer French lines had already been pointed out to us on the map and we were now on the way to the outer trenches, of which there were three rows, the nearest eighteen hundred and the farthest three hundred to five hundred yards from the Germans. The complexion of the landscape, which on the way up from

## THEIR SPIRIT

Epernay was so smiling, had changed. It looked worn and desolate. Not a soul was in sight except ourselves so far as the eye could reach. In the dismal fields as we flew past we caught sight of wire entanglement and the tops of trenches. Now and again a solitary gun boomed from the rear, two or three miles away. Presumably they were shooting over our heads, but at that time we saw nothing and no response came from the Germans. By the way, I heard in Paris that ever since the exchange of notes between Washington and Berlin, the French call the shells that don't explode "Yankees."

We alighted behind a rough rampart of earth and chalk stone, beyond which was the entrance to the trench

## THEIR SPIRIT

line, or “boyau” as it is called, and after a few words between our lieutenant and the officer in charge we were admitted. Perhaps a dozen soldiers were visible at this point. As we passed on we kept meeting them during the two hours we were there, in little groups, not many at a time, or emerging from the dugouts. I understood that it was the French custom to keep only a small force in the outer trenches, on the theory that an attack is ordinarily preceded by a bombardment and that because of close telephonic communication with the rear there would be ample time to bring up troops in case of an attempt to “rush” the position. The trenches were very devious, purposely so in order to bewilder the enemy who should enter

## THEIR SPIRIT

them. All those we saw were cut through the solid chalk rock and had a hard bottom with a narrow rut at the edge to carry the moisture. Their level was slightly above our heads and their sides toward the top were gay with poppies and wild flowers, the growth of which in such grim surroundings is encouraged in order that the trenches may be less obvious to the German aeroplanes, or "avions" as the French call them.

The force we saw was a detachment of the 288th regiment and the major in command courteously gave us every facility for realizing what life at the front was like, short of inducing the Germans to open fire. As we proceeded windingly from one trench to another we were permitted to take a

## THEIR SPIRIT

view, not more than one or two of us at a time, of the German line, which even from the nearest point—three hundred yards—resembled a series of irregular white chalk marks. At certain places there was a narrow platform where one could stand without exposing more than the head or neck. Those who had us in charge must have considered the risk to be slight, for they did not hesitate to show themselves. Once, when we were nearest to the German line and several of us, myself included, were peering over the top of a trench, partly sheltered by one of the rough ramparts or observation posts which we came to here and there, crack went a mitrailleuse. The promptness with which we ducked simultaneously made us all burst out laugh-

## THEIR SPIRIT

ing, and the next instant we realized that the gun had been discharged a little farther on in our boyau for the edification of the rest of the party.

Noticing, in the hands of a private, a gun with a curious attachment at the end a little like a telescope, I asked what it was for. An officer told the soldier to fire. This he did at once and we saw distinctly a black object, about the size of a golf ball, describe an arc with the velocity of a well-hit mid-iron shot, then fall apparently in or on the German trench. Up rose a black cloud of smoke and dirt with whatever else happened to be where it struck. This was a bomb, of course, and the weapon was said to be a new contrivance.

Presently an officer led the way into

## THEIR SPIRIT

a subterranean chamber, a steep descent at first by a narrow and dark passage. After reaching the level we gropingly ascended toward an aperture, large enough for a man's body, through which our guide set the example of crawling on his stomach. Several of us followed him and found ourselves on the ground outside the trenches, in No Man's Land, so-called. In front of us from one angle was a hundred yards of wire entanglement, beyond which we could not see while recumbent, but from another the German trenches were in plain sight at short range; yet nothing stirred in them. The chamber from which we issued was an outpost for machine-gun fire, known as "*un abri caverne avancé.*" One of the party who re-

## THEIR SPIRIT

mained in the trench said it seemed surprising that the Germans did not spy us; but our guide's lack of concern made us take for granted that they would not fire if they did, and we remained lying or sitting on the dried grass for several minutes.

Later we were informed that some guns would be fired from the rear for our benefit, and having been conducted to another subterranean chamber, were told to watch through the aperture. At intervals during the day perhaps twenty random shots had been fired, all of them, to judge by the sound, of the same calibre as the "soixante-quinze," the boom of which we now heard. The location of the gun was presumably a mile or two away. Gazing fixedly at the German line four

## THEIR SPIRIT

hundred yards in front of us, I saw the shell break in the trench, as it seemed, and a mass black as a thunder-cloud leap into the air. Boom went a second cannon, but this time I failed to see the shell explode. It was now my turn to retire, and two more shots were fired for the other half of our party. To have big guns discharged to order “while you wait” gave me slightly the sense of being “personally conducted,” and I had to assure myself that I was a guest of the French War Office and not a Cook’s tourist. Yet there was grim reality staring us in the face from less than five hundred yards away, and simply because of an idiosyncrasy — the habit of not firing until after five o’clock, — ignoring our presence.

Of course we visited the dugouts and

## THEIR SPIRIT

saw the quarters of both the officers and the poilus, dark and cramped at best in order to be reasonably safe. It is a wonder that all look so cheerful and in such good physical trim. The soldiers smiled at us a little wonderingly; the word had been passed that we were American visitors. As I rounded a turn, the dim underground passage widened into a sort of cave where two men were lounging on their bunks, which were one above the other, while close by a third was seated at a table before a number of telegraph wires. Life under such conditions, even to save one's skin, must be contracted and gloomy, but I did not behold during the visit any face which suggested despondency or lack of vigor. The soldiers that we met

## THEIR SPIRIT

were a well-seasoned and resolute lot. While retracing our steps we came upon two of them carrying a huge steaming can of soup for their comrades in the forward trench. Before we left we were shown the kitchen and the Red Cross shelter, where the wounded were cared for. It was confided to me that the Germans had not lost their morale, judging from an officer captured the previous day, who, on cross-examination, said: "We may not be able to break through your line, but neither will you through ours."

At the request of our hosts, camera shots of our party were taken at several points in the trench during the afternoon, the last time grouped with some of the soldiers. Shortly after this we bade adieu to Major B—— in com-

## THEIR SPIRIT

mand, who had been so accommodating, and, reëntering our two motors, took our departure from the firing line. Our lieutenant, who earlier in the day had arranged where we should lunch, carried us to a little inn for afternoon tea, where we found the other automobiles awaiting us.

When we resumed our journey the high speed at which each car was driven over the screened road already referred to was very noticeable. We simply tore along. The obvious deduction seemed to be that, as it was now five o'clock, the Germans might begin firing at any time. Some one said our chaperon had an engagement and must be back on time. Be this as it may, I think he was glad to have us out of range. Very shortly after we had left

## THEIR SPIRIT

the screened road behind us, we came upon a long procession of munition wagons, lorries, artillerymen (with only a single gun, a soixante-quinze), which stretched halfway to Epernay. If their presence became known to the enemy, presumably they were fired on, for they formed a capital target. We never heard, of course, whether they passed safely or not.

At Epernay our friend, Lieutenant D——, took leave of us, announcing as a final courtesy that seats had been reserved for us in the dining-car. We were indebted to him for a most absorbing day and shall always associate the French officer with his vigorous, engaging, modest personality. The train was full of soldiers returning from the front, but the accommoda-

## THEIR SPIRIT

tions were no less comfortable than in time of peace. We reached Paris before ten o'clock and our first obligation next morning was to call at the Bureau de la Presse in order to return our identity books and express gratitude for the unusual privilege that had been accorded us.

## VIII

MY time, both before and after my visit to the front during the too brief ten days I was in Paris, was spent in familiarizing myself with relief work. Ordinary sight-seeing was out of the question for any one alive to the intensity of the situation beneath the prevalent surface brightness. Galleries were forgotten; I think that most of them were closed. I did go, of course, to Des Invalides to view the collection of German trophies in the wide courtyard, an interesting array including a Taube, parts of a Zeppelin, several coupoles for cannon-revolver (a sort of armored beehive with a pro-

## THEIR SPIRIT

truding gun) and a quantity of cannon, from the obusier of two hundred and fifty millimetres to the smallest sizes, lances-bombes, mitrailleuses, etc. There was also on exhibition a huge French biplane with two propellers, that had returned in a damaged condition after having been attacked. The size and eagerness of the crowd, including many soldiers, that danced attendance on these visible symbols of success, was impressive. I went also to Fontainebleau to pass the week-end with a friend, and here (as everywhere) a wing in each of three of the most ancient and beautiful châteaux in France had been transformed into a hospital. Who would have guessed that the alert and seemingly care-free mistress of one of these, who sauntered with us

## THEIR SPIRIT

through her verdant alleys, had a husband and two sons at Verdun?

Whatever may be said of the failure of American imagination as a whole to visualize the war, history will be forever proud of the corps of American sympathizers who have lavishly contributed money or else laborious days to help save France. Though many statistics have been published concerning the relief work in Paris, one who can say, "I was there and this is what I saw," is often more appealing than mere facts and figures. I had time to visit a few of the war charities, and should like to refer to them before I close. First of all to Mrs. Wharton's American Hostels for Refugees and Children of Flanders, which I was

## THEIR SPIRIT

given the opportunity to inspect thoroughly. As I have previously mentioned, I was already one of her Boston committee; but of course at long range it had not been easy to get a clear-cut picture of all she has accomplished since the war began. To quote the last report, the Hostels have struggled through nearly two years of existence depending wholly on private support, and with the gifts collected they have helped over 13,000 destitute, hopeless people, cared for 12,000 sick persons, distributed over 69,000 garments, served 203,195 meals, and found employment for nearly 6000 refugees. To do this costs about five thousand dollars a month, but much more remains to be done. The two most urgent problems to be dealt with are (1) De-

## THEIR SPIRIT

cent lodgings; (2) The isolation of the tuberculous. Three model lodging-houses have already been opened. In them have been fitted rooms accommodating, as a rule, two adults or a mother with two children. From eight to fifteen francs (\$1.50 to \$2.75) a month is charged for one of these rooms, light, heat, and washing included, and each house is under the supervision of a resident manager. It is hoped that several other houses of the same type may be opened. A sum of \$20,000 is needed to go on with this work, apart from the general expenses of the Hostels. As to tuberculosis, many of the refugees and especially the children have developed consumptive tendencies owing to the exposure and hardships they underwent in their flight

## THEIR SPIRIT

and to the misery in which they have since been living. A great number are still in the first stages of the disease and could be quickly cured by good air and proper diet; but there is not at this moment a free tuberculosis hospital for civilians open in France. In Mrs. Wharton's own words, "The greatest help that lovers of France can give her in her awful struggle is to try to remedy this deficiency. We need, and need at once, a big house in the country to accommodate at least one hundred patients; and we need forty thousand dollars to fit it up and run it. If we can get the house and the money, we can save many children for France; and France needs her children now as she has never needed them before."

## IX

ON the day after my arrival from England I went by motor with Mrs. Wharton to Saint-Ouen, just beyond one of the gates of Paris, to witness the confirmation of some two hundred Belgian little girls by the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris at one of the six houses belonging to the Children of Flanders Rescue Committee. The building, which used to be a seminary, lent itself to the occasion by providing a room capable of holding comfortably the attendant clergy, some twenty Flemish nuns, the small group of visitors and the children, who, in stuff frocks, little straw hats precisely alike, and kneeling side by side in rows on low

## THEIR SPIRIT

benches, the youngest nearest to the altar, sat motionless as mice during the service and the cardinal's address, except when uttering the requisite responses with impeccable uniformity. When the time came they left their benches in regular order, and, stepping noiselessly in single file with folded palms, between which each girl held a slip of paper marked with her name, approached the cardinal to be anointed. They were presented in turn by Mrs. Royall Tyler, the vice-president of the Rescue Committee, to Cardinal Amette, a most benign and gracious dignitary, and when the ceremony was finished each stole demurely back to her seat, with closed eyes and folded hands. It was a touching and pathetic ceremony. In the six houses the Children

## THEIR SPIRIT

of Flanders Committee is caring for about seven hundred and fifty children, one hundred and five old men and women, and some sixty nuns (who superintend and teach the children); altogether over nine hundred people, all from the same narrow strip of shattered and ruined Belgium.

After the religious exercises there was singing by the children in the outer hall, an address to the cardinal in French by one of the girls, the presentation to him by a smaller child of an immense bouquet of “belles fleurs” with a couplet in verse, some patriotic words of thanks by the cardinal, at the close of which he exclaimed, “Vive la Belgique!” This delighted and inspired the children, who retorted with “Vive le Cardinal!” so ardently that

## THEIR SPIRIT

he lingered at the door to add still another spirited word, as though their plight and the pathos of the occasion had touched him deeply. When Mrs. Wharton and I rode away a little later, the children, who had been let loose out of doors, waved their handkerchiefs at their benefactress and once more cried enthusiastically "Vive la Belgique!"

It should be added that a lady who before the war was one of the chief movers in the revival of artistic lace-making in Belgium has organized lace schools in two of the Houses and the girls are being taught to make not merely one kind, but several kinds of lace, so as to render them independent of the middleman.

Next day I was carried to see the

## THEIR SPIRIT

different Hostels by Mrs. Tyler, Mrs. Wharton's clear-headed and executive chief of staff, who has virtually devoted every day for two years to superintending them. First to Avenue Félix Faure, where there are about two hundred refugees, occupying sometimes one room, sometimes two, for which they pay eight to fifteen francs per month, including gas, electric light and clean bed-linen twice a month, with use of the kitchen on the étage in common — decent, nice-mannered folk who seemed very contented and very grateful. I talked with an elderly and decrepit, but still alert old couple, who described to us their escape from the German invasion. Across the entry was a stranded young mother with her baby in its crib. All able-bodied men

## THEIR SPIRIT

and women in a position to earn a living are eliminated after they have been put in the way of getting work. Then to 19 Rue de la Quintine, where free furnished lodgings are provided for women with large families of young children. Here again the inmates who had been rescued from privation and filth beamed at us from their wash tubs, ironing-boards and kitchen stoves. One family of thirteen was neatly housed in two rooms. The tenants are expected to contribute a little each month for their accommodation and almost invariably they do. The French Government does not pay the soldiers and allows only 1.25 francs per day to the wives of those at the front, with fifty centimes for each child under sixteen. I was told that these people were in a

## THEIR SPIRIT

pitable plight before they were taken in. Only about fifteen per cent of the women now helped by the Hostels are Belgians; the rest are refugees from the invaded French provinces.

From here we went to the Rue Taitbout, where there is a restaurant, free clinic and dispensary, workroom for women and reading-room, all under the same roof — a busy place, I can assure you, and most orderly. I talked with the pleasant-faced doctor who keeps an eye on all these people. The rooms where the women eat, — coming either from their work upstairs or outside, — with little tables holding six each, were very inviting. There are about thirty-five hundred helped by the Hostels and nine hun-

## THEIR SPIRIT

dred children by the Children of Flanders. I visited also the Day Nursery and clothing dépôt on the Rue Boissy d'Anglas, the grocery store at 67 Rue Pierre Charron, where coal and other supplies are furnished on proper vouchers, and "Le Comité dentellier Belge-Franco-Américain," 25 Rue de Crouchet, where the lace made by the Children of Flanders is sold.

Another busy charity which seemed to me admirably conducted — one well known to many Americans — was the American Relief Clearing House, the initials of which form the word "Arch." The boast that it is indeed the keystone to all the other œuvres is well founded, for it is through this organization that virtually all the gifts

## THEIR SPIRIT

which come from the United States are distributed in France. To the American Relief Clearing House has been accorded ocean transport by the Compagnie Générale Trans-atlantique free customs entry, and also by the Government free transport on all railroads in France. At the instance of my friend Walter Abbott, who is the presiding spirit and fountain of authority at its offices 5 Rue François Premier, I was taken on a tour of inspection by Mr. James R. Barbour (Yale 1900),— observe this tribute from a Harvard pen,— the vigorous master of transportation, who is responsible for the prompt and accurate handling of every shipment from America, a service to which he has devoted all his energies with indefatigable zeal since the incep-

## THEIR SPIRIT

tion of the enterprise. I viewed the quai at the railroad station entirely reserved for the Clearing House, also the warehouses — there are four in all, two in the Rue Pierre Charron, two in the new barracks near the Porte-Dauphine — where huge cases and the crates and boxes are received, opened, repacked, and forwarded. Up to the present time the Clearing House has received on behalf of itself and others about fifty thousand cases, bales, and packages and forwarded another fifty thousand, their contents ranging from a dozen to twelve hundred articles and comprising “great bales of cotton, absorbent and not absorbent; clothes for men, women and children; under-wear, socks, shoes, hospital garments, bandages, gauze, surgical instruments,

## THEIR SPIRIT

and over one hundred other useful and valuable gifts." At one of the warehouses we lingered to examine two auto-wagons that had just arrived from America — the one a present from New York, the other from Chicago sympathizers, and each, so I was told, a most timely and serviceable donation.

Not far from my hotel were the bright, compact new quarters of the American Fund for French Wounded, Alcazar d'Eté, Avenue Gabriel, Champs-Elysées. All articles consigned to it from America are here delivered forthwith by the American Relief Clearing House. Whoever studies the map of France to-day finds it so dotted with hospitals as to rival

## THEIR SPIRIT

the starry heavens, yet there are few of these hospitals that have not received direct assistance from this source. As I watched the diligent and systematic voluntary workers busy amid the never-ceasing ebb and flow of things arriving, and things to be unpacked, sorted and sent away, it was easy to credit the figures of the preceding month — “cases received 1034; bales and cases despatched, 803; hospital articles and dressings despatched, 357,475.” “Do you require any more assistance?” I inquired of one of the chief officials. “Oh, yes,” she replied, “as packers and drivers — girls content with a steady task; but send us no more women eager for picturesque work and to be ‘near the soul of the war.’”

## THEIR SPIRIT

It is difficult to get away from France without giving eight days' notice. The French authorities reserve the right to keep one waiting in order to make inquiries. One whose time is limited should immediately after arrival apply for leave to depart. Here again I was fortunate, for my friends were able to persuade the Chef Adjoint de la Sureté Municipale that one who had been granted permission to visit the trenches was not likely to be an enemy of the Republic. The urbane official, whose ever-vigilant eye and feline mouth suggested, nevertheless, a handsome tiger in repose, looked me over with a glance, and presently I departed with my passport visé.

As I stood on the deck of an Ameri-

## THEIR SPIRIT

can liner from Liverpool a week later, I found myself almost regretful to be returning to my native land. Despite the underlying horror and distress to which I had been privy, I would gladly have lingered under the spell of the undaunted and wonderfully resourceful spirit of the two peoples among whom I had passed the summer, and I felt a little impatient at the thought of listening to conservative phrases, such as "God be praised, we are out of this war!" or its hard-headed counterpart, "What concern is it of ours?" I had seen a great deal that was interesting and that I should never forget; yet, as I reviewed my visit, the concrete factors seemed to dwindle and the impression that remained was one of soul rather than of substance. It is not so

## THEIR SPIRIT

much what one sees or can see over there that is moving as what one feels to exist; not so much the endless chain of marvellous production, unique in the annals of history, as the silent exaltation which transmutes universal suffering into fresh forms of national energy. England and France are fighting for their lives, but it is the quality of their fortitude that appeals to the imagination of the onlooker. One does not doubt that they will win in the end; not merely because their latent resources are greater, but because of the intensity of their conviction that the fate of democratic liberty hinges on the outcome of the titanic struggle and that death would be preferable to the collapse of the moral forces of civilization. The fail-

## THEIR SPIRIT

ure of the American people as a whole to appreciate this is the real indictment which Europe has against them.

THE END

**The Riverside Press**

**CAMBRIDGE . MASSACHUSETTS**

**U . S . A**







Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process  
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide

Treatment Date: JUN 2001

**Preservation Technologies**

A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION

111 Thomson Park Drive  
Cranberry Township, PA 16066  
(724) 779-2111



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 007 705 275 6

